

## THE INDIAN FRAUDS.

## ARRIVAL OF THE COMMISSIONERS AT CHEYENNE.

**MR. SAVILLE'S COMPLAINTS—INTEREST IN THE INVESTIGATION—THE WYOMING MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN RING—THEIR INFLUENCE AND STRENGTH—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE RING.**

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

CHEYENNE, W. T., July 30.—A Buzz of excitement greeted the Commissioners appointed to investigate the alleged frauds in the Indian service upon their arrival at this place yesterday afternoon. For days past the appointment and arrival of the Commission have been the subject of general discussion among the people, and of deep concern on the part of those interested in the Indian contracts, either personally, politically, or socially. Cheyenne is the point at which the Indian goods are transshipped from the train to Red Cloud, Spotted Tail, and other agencies by wagon. A number of persons are therefore interested in the traffic, and the contractor and Indian agent have a considerable following among those who are indebted to them for favors. Gov. Fletcher appeared to be the only Commissioner who was received, and as he stepped forward he was greeted by Mr. Saville, the Indian Agent at Red Cloud, who had come down to see the Commissioners and talk with them about the investigation. Other friends also approached, and Commissioners Harris and Faulkner were introduced. Mr. Saville took Gov. Fletcher aside and asked what was the scope of the investigation, and when the Commission intended to start. It concluded by placing himself at the service of the Commissioners. Mr. Saville is a swarthy man, of spare figure, excitable, and nervous. He looks like a shrewd, thrifty man; but his face indicates no special force of character. He manifested considerable anxiety and exerted himself to be agreeable, not only to the Commissioners, but also to all whom he encountered.

## PUBLIC OPINION AT CHEYENNE.

After the Commissioners had entered their hotel they received numerous visitors representing the friends of the Indian officials and traders. In my investigations through the town I found that there was a decided opinion held by two classes. The friends of the Ring, office-holders, and contractors declared that the charges made by Prof. Marsh were unfounded, and were intended only for effect. A fine looking old gentleman, who was on the platform, was introduced to me by a Federal official. I asked him incidentally what he thought of the charges against the Indian officials. He replied sharply: "I think that they are unfounded and are started for a purpose; people will soon find out what is intended. There is more 'tear' than wool; and you will find it out if you go much among our people one day."

After he had left me I asked who the gentleman was, and learned that he was Surveyor-General of Wyoming Territory. I concluded that I would take him at his word and learn what the people of his city had to say on the subject, and I will state right here that the leading, representative, independent, business men concurred in the general opinion that the system of obtaining and furnishing Indian supplies was a fraud upon the Indians and the Government, democratical to all who participated in it, and a benefit only to a few rascally contractors. "Why, Sir," said a prominent business man, "it stands to reason that a man who contracts to furnish a article at a rate less than the cost of production is either a swindler or a fool. My experience is that they are not fools. Some one must be cheated, either the Indian or the Government. It is generally bad."

I learn that the principal contractors are evenly divided among Democrats and Republicans. With one exception, I do not understand that they operate under the cloak of religion. That may do for Washington, but in this hard, practical country a man would only be handed at for his hypocrisy, and gain nothing in the end. As a United States official said: "No, the men who are engaged in the work of furnishing Indian supplies do not perform their contracts in the name of the Lord. They obtain their positions through their political efficacy or the adroit use of their money, and if the investigation is properly conducted this fact will be demonstrated."

## THE RING.

The Indian Ring as represented here is composed of several contractors, the Indian agents, and the Federal officials, who from necessity or policy are compelled to countenance their practices and indicate their actions. It is a compact organization, and its ramifications are widely extended through the West. It has managed to build up a constituency of considerable strength. This was largely due to the fact that the Ring spent a good deal of money in the country, and many of their adherents were highly educated and well-to-do. By Col. J. M. Clark, the Indian Commissioner; he had received instructions from the Indian Commissioners to the quantity of "Double XX" merchandise to be furnished to the Indians. Martin, the Indian Agent at Red Cloud, weighed 88 pounds a sack; witness counted the whole car load and the weight a number of sacks, striking an average weight; the instructions from the Indian Commissioners were to select a number of bags and take an average weight of the total weight; no man was not to strike an average in weighing for the army; he weighed every bag.

shipped by Barclay White to Mr. McCann, the contractor for the transportation of Indian goods; this flour was inspected at Cheyenne by Mr. McCann; much of this Indian flour was received before witness became store-keeper, and a great portion remained in store as rejected; could not tell whether this was Martin's flour or that shipped by Barclay White; goods intended for Red Cloud were usually shipped by cattle train; Mr. McCann, the contractor for transportation, made arrangements with these cattle-train owners, and usually sent them to the storehouse for loading; McCann had a small outfit for transportation which was under the charge of a man named Sawyer; Agent Saville never complained of detection of goods at the warehouse; the goods were always promptly delivered, except last winter, when, in a severe storm it was difficult to get the necessary cattle for transportation; three cattle trains were procured; but did not know whether the distance between Cheyenne and Red Cloud has ever been measured; the rejected flour in the warehouse was sold by Mr. Martin to Mr. Alther; Mr. O'Brien, the Sheriff of this county, acting as agent for Mr. Martin; over 200 sacks were removed from the warehouse by Mr. Alther; he believed that the flour shipped to Red Cloud Agency was in double sacks, stamped with words, "Indian Department"; believe the flour received from Martin was in double sacks; the flour received from Barclay White in double sacks was furnished by O. P. Harford, and was also branded "Indian Department"; the rejected flour of O. P. Harford, aggregating 163 sacks, remained in the warehouse a long time; these 163 sacks were delivered to O. P. Harford on D. J. McCann's order; Harford gave an order to a man named Culbertson & Young, grocers, who received the flour and sold it; they said that they had received \$2.25 to \$2.50 in money for some of the flour, and traded for meat allowed \$3.50 for the flour; the flour shipped by Barclay White was put up in various sized bags, some of 88 pounds, others larger; this flour was always weighed at the warehouse, and again at the agency; in shipping to the agency, the weight was taken off the bags, and given to the contractor; for the agent, and the third for the contractor; the agent certifies to the condition of the goods; witness shipped some bags of blankets to Red Cloud; when called in by Mr. McCann, Mrs. McCann, and Prof. Marsh, he said he had no weight given him from the bags; often repaired supplies because these were breakage and required re-supply; witness remeasured some sacks he received last winter intended for Red Cloud Agency; this could not be done without weighing the bags; the flour was rejected by Barclay White in various sized bags, some of 88 pounds, others larger; 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